

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

VOL. II. No. 4

SAN DIEGO, ALTA CALIFORNIA, OCTOBER 3, 2008

PRICE: FREE

Food and other goods

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The correspondence between Bandini and his son-in-law Abel Stearns let us know what foods were consumed and what kind of goods were used around 1840-60 in San Diego. Bandini was constantly asking Stearns to send him various food items, sometimes he just ran out of them or they were difficult for him to get in San Diego or from his other ranches. In one of the letters written in 1858 in Tijuana, Bandini says that the ranches are not producing anything, that's why he sometimes has to get groceries in San Francisco, but they are too expensive there. He asks Stearns if he can get cheaper food in Los Angeles.

Sugar was very scarce, and one letter tells us that Bandini wasn't able to get any sugar in San Diego, and he was very angry because he knew some people in San Diego could get it but not him. Other goods he asks for are coffee, *panocha* (hard brown

sugar; an item his family really liked), rice, wheat, salt, flour, tea, beans, corn, oranges, wine, *aguardiente* (liquor), *pinole* (roasted corn flour), and chocolate.

In one of the letters where Bandini talks about his dying father, he asks Stearns to please do whatever he can to send him coffee because that is the only thing his father wants to have, and also some bread.

Bandini had cattle, so he had easy access to meat, which they salted. He sent his daughters 64 watermelons once, and also cabbages and pumpkins. He mentioned eating lots of grapes, and in the next letter he said he was sick of them.

OTHER GOODS

Things that they used in their everyday life are accounted for in several letters, things that Bandini asked Stearns to get for himself, his family and for his workers as well.

Items such as white and blue cotton cloth, silk and striped cloth were requested to make blouses, shirts and skirts and flowered linen and cotton to make bedspreads, also green ribbon for his daughters. He would also mention *sarapes*, handkerchiefs,

rebozos, satin to make shoes, a good cordovan (soft leather originally made from goat-skin) for himself, gold and silver thread, paper, ink bottles, drinking glasses, serving platters (that apparently were easy to break), window glass, white blankets, knives, rope, axes and soap, amongst others. In a letter written on December 24th 1839 Bandini asked Stearns to send him Mexican fireworks.

Bandini loved to entertain and have parties and guests, maybe this was the reason why in one letter he asked Stearns to send him two dozen saucers and cups. In this particular letter we can see that he didn't have the appropriate tableware to entertain his guests: "It is not good that the *fiscal de la suprema corte* (district attorney) receive such stingy treatment."

